provident fund dues from the defaulting employers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any legal provision has been introduced for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) to (D) in both the employees State Insurance Act, 1948 and the Employees Provident Funds & Misc. Provisions Act, 1952, there are already in-built provisions for determination and recovery of the ESI/EPF dues. In order to prevent/tackle the problem of default, provisions have also been made for levy of damages and interest, attachement/sale of property of the defaulter, launching of criminal proceedings under section 406/409 of IPC etc. As provided under the respective Acts, the ESI & EPF authorities are already taking necessary action to recover the dues outstanding against the defaulting establishments.

Buffer Stock in FCI

110. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Food Corportion of India is in a comfortable position in maintaining its buffer stock of foodgrains;

(b) wheher the procurment of food grain is also satisfactory;

(c) if so, whether FCI has taken steps to ensure proper storage facilities and also utilise the surplus stock; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The total procurement of wheat and rice in the Central pool during the last 3 years has been as under:—

Marketing Season	Wheat	rice
	(in lakh tonnes)	
1993-94	128.35	136.51
1994-95	118.61	132.89
1995-96 (upto 20.11.95)	123.18	37.61

The shortfall in procurement of rice during 1995-96 so far is attributed to reduction in production due to floods in some parts of Punjab, Haryana and Andhra pradesh and commencement of season from 1.10.95 in Punjab and Haryana instead of 1.9.95 last year.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. At macro level the existing storage capacity is adequate to store the available stocks. however, difficulties do arise in the heavy procurement areas. In order to take a care of any defficiency at local levels the field officers of FCI have been delegated with powers for hiring additional storage capacity from private parties/Govt. agencies like CWC, SWC, State Govt. etc. Further, as a long term strategy, a number of steps like expediting ongoing construction of godown, enhancing of FCI's CAP capacity, hiring of abandoned air strips for creating large open storage complexes etc. are being taken. The FCI has also undertaken construction of additional storage capacity at strategic locations. During the 8th Five year Plan (1992-97) FCI has been given a target of constructing an additional capacity of 6 lakh tonnes out of which it has already constructed 3.24 lakh tonnes so far.

Apart from regular releases for PDS, the FCI is selling wheat and rice in the open market at price below FCI's economic cost. Besides, wheat and/or rice is/are being alloted at subsidised rates for various welfare schemes like Mid-day Meals Scheme, Employment

Generation Scheme, to SC/ST/OBC Hostels and to Modern Food Industries (I) Ltd., for manufacturing bread and energy foods etc.

Contract Labourers in Bhilai Steel Plant

111. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bhilai Steel Plant has the largest concentration of contract labour for the last many years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these labourers are not being paid the fixed minimum wages;

(c) if so, facts thereof; and

(d) whether Government propose to ensure the payment of minimum wages to these labourers and also to regularise their services?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Modifying the Procurement Policy in Punjab

112. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proppose to modify the Procurement Policy implemented in the State of Punjab, this year;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) what are the rçasons for classification between fine and supper-fine Paddy crops in Punjab State; and

(d) the steps taken by Government in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) No change is envisaged in the existing procurement policy of the Government for procurement of foodgrains.

(b) The existing procurment policy of the Government ensures the producers a remunerative price for their produce, and has also helped through the years, in ensuring adequate supply of foodgrains to the consumers at reasonable prices thereby creating a sense of food security in the country.

(c) and (d) The classification of paddy is based on length/breadth ratio as per the recommendations of the Balasubramanian Committee appointed by the Government of India in the year 1975. accordingly, paddy/rice are classified in three groups viz. 'common', 'fine' and 'superfine'. These classifications were recommended to the State Governments/UTs for adoption/implementation so as to maintain uniformity in classification throughout the country.

FELICITATION TO THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

MR. CHAIRMAN: hon'ble Members, I have an announcement to make. I would like to give some good news to all of you. In the recent Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Bucharest, our Deputy Chairman, Dr. (Smt.) Najma Heptulla, has been elected as a members of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. I am sure you will join me in congratulating her on her success in this election.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: (Rajasthan) Sir, you have not read out the last sentence which says that she is going to host a dinner for the Members of this House.

PROCLAMATION UNDER ARTICLE 356 OF THE CONSTITUTION IN RELATION TO THE STATE OF UTTAR PRADESH

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SYED SIBTEY RAZI): Sir , I lay on the Table a copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers:—

(i) Proclamation [G.S.R. No. 685(E)], issued by the President on the 18th October,. 1995, under article 356 of the